

## Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*)

(2 subspecies/populations; 1 within plan area)

Conservation Concern Category:  
**Moderate Concern**

### Population Trend (PT)

Stable—(Delany and Scott 2002: Groves et al. 1996)

“appears to have extended its breeding range northward in the Canadian Arctic...possible long-term decline in counts of spring migrants along California coast, along with increase in numbers wintering in American and Canadian waters evident from CBCs, may partly reflect a northward shift in wintering distribution...increasing frequency of occurrence on inland water bodies in recent decades...populations summering throughout Alaska showed no significant trend from 1977 to 1993...populations summering in Prince William Sound declined by 94% from 1972 to 1989-1993 (likely related to changes in forage fish abundance due to climatic regime shift; also oil spill effects)...CBC data from 1959-1988 revealed positive trends in size of populations wintering in Pacific northwest; overall trend for continent was 5.5%/yr...” (Russell 2002)

**PT FACTOR SCORE=3**

### Population Size (PS)

900,000-1,500,000 total individuals (Delany and Scott 2002: WCA 2001 (Denver workshop) estimates 300,000-500,000 pairs=900,000-1,500,000 individuals)

“lower bound of about 162,000 birds for Alaska population...spring migrant survey (California) revealed 1,002,361 northbound loons... the survey done to obtain this number was done in 1979...” (Russell 2002)

**PS FACTOR SCORE=1**

### Threats to Breeding Populations (TB)

“breeding populations may be limited by availability of high-quality nest sites...eggs gathered for food by Inuits...relatively elevated OC levels in eggs, brain, fat, etc...possibly susceptible to habitat degradation via acidification of ponds...apparently sensitive to disturbance at/near nest (e.g. to airplanes)...” (Russell 2002)

After fledging, family groups move from freshwater nesting areas to marine waters in preparation for migration and would be vulnerable to potential pollution from offshore petroleum exploration and development (Sinclair et al., 2003)

**TB FACTOR SCORE=4**

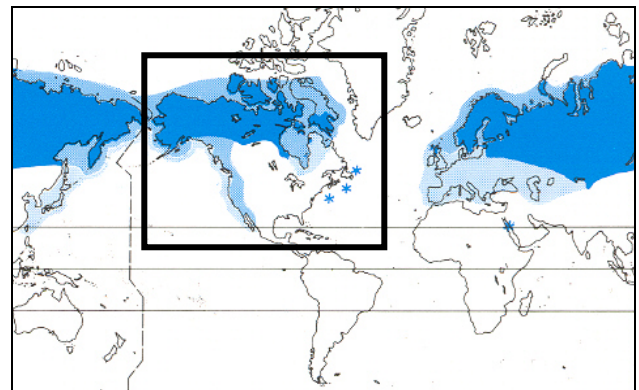
### Threats to Non-breeding Populations (TN)

“some birds apparently captured by fishermen on wintering grounds in Gulf of California, perhaps to eliminate competition...some incidental mortality in commercial gill-net fisheries...vulnerable to mortality from oil spills...” (Russell 2002)

Potential impact of overfishing of forage fish (Marshbird Workshop 2005)

**TN FACTOR SCORE=4**

**Global Range** (Harrison 1983; inset=plan area range)



### Breeding Distribution (BD)

Arctic North America (Delany and Scott 2002)

3,118,900 km<sup>2</sup> (plan area distribution; estimated from range maps)

**BD FACTOR SCORE=3**

### Non-breeding Distribution (ND)

Pacific coast of North America (Delany and Scott 2002)

8,660,200 km<sup>2</sup> (plan area distribution; estimated from range maps)

Recommend evaluating an area from shoreline out to 200m depth offshore—no inland area or iced areas included (Marshbird Workshop 2005)

**ND FACTOR SCORE=3**

## Literature Cited:

- Delany, S. and S. Scott. 2002. *Waterbird Population Estimates – Third Edition. Wetlands International Global Series No. 12*, Wageningen, The Netherlands. Pp: 22
- Harrison, P. 1983. *Seabirds: an identification guide*. Houghton Mifflin Co., New York, NY. Pp: 411
- Russell, R.W. 2002. Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*). In *The Birds Of North America*, No.657 (A.Poole and F. Gill, eds.). The Birds of North America, Inc., Philadelphia, PA.
- Sinclair, P.H., W.A. Nixon, C.D. Eckert and N.L. Hughes. 2003. *Birds of the Yukon Territory*. UBC Press, Vancouver. 595 pp